

Message Text

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DEPT PLEASE PASS DAR, MAPUTO, PRETORIA, CAPE TOWN, LONDON,
USUN FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PFOR, RH, US
SUBJ: REFLECTIONS ON THE RHODESIA SITUATION

REF: (A) LONDON 1792, (B) MAPUTO 118

SUMMARY: LONDON'S TELEGRAM PROVIDES A STIMULATING ANALYSIS
OF THE RHODESIAN SITUATION. WHILE THE EMBASSY WOULD AGREE WITH
MUCH OF IT, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POINTS WITH WHICH WE WOULD
TAKE EXCEPTION. THIS IS PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE WE BELIEVE EVENTS
HAVE GONE WELL BEYOND THE STAGE AT WHICH THEY CAN BE REVERSED.
WE HAVE PASSED THE POINT WHEN A MODERATE, RESPONSIBLE AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT CAN BE SUBSTITUTED FOR THE SMITH REGIME. IF WE ARE
NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT SOMETHING LESS THAN THAT, WE MAY BE FACED
RATHER SOON WITH A TOTALLY HOSTILE GROUP THAT WILL DRIVE THE
WHITES FROM RHODESIA AND MAKE AN EVENTUAL SOLUTION IN SOUTH
AFRICA MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. IN WHAT FOLLOWS, EMBASSY ARGUES
THAT AN ORDERLY PROCESS TO AFRICAN RULE IS MOST IMPORTANT TO US
INTERESTS BUT QUITE POSSIBLY NOT COMPATIBLE WITH A MAJORITY
AFRICAN SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT; THAT A ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT
CONTAINING NATIONALIST RADICALS WILL NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN
THEIR DOMINATION OF THE SITUATION AND THEIR INCLUSION ACTUALLY
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HAS SOME ADVANTAGES; THAT NDBELE SUPPORT THROUGH NKOMO OR ONE OF
HIS DEPUTIES IS A NECESSARY ELEMENT IN ANY SETTLEMENT; THAT AN
AGREEMENT IN WHICH SMITH PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IS BECOMING LESS
LIKELY; AND THAT THE SIDES ARE LIKELY TO MOVE FARTHER APART IN
THE NEXT FEW MONTHS BUT BE UNSUCCESSFUL IN THEIR EFFORTS AND
BECOME MORE AMENABLE TO A NEW SETTLEMENT ATTEMPT LATER. ELEMENTS
OF A POSTURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE INTERIM ARE RECOMMENDED.

END SUMMARY.

1. LONDON LISTS THE PRIORITY OF US INTERESTS AS FIRST, CREATION OF A GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED BY A MAJORITY OF AFRICANS; AND SECOND, PRESERVATION OF STABILITY WITH PROTECTION OF WESTERN INTERESTS. WE WOULD BE INCLINED TO LIST THEM AS FIRST, TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT TO BLACK AFRICANS; SECOND, ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS IN AS ORDERLY A FASHION AS POSSIBLE WITH THE GREATEST POSSIBLE PROTECTION OF WESTERN INTERESTS; AND THIRD, ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED BY A MAJORITY OF ZIMBABWEANS. IN OUR VIEW A SOLUTION IN RHODESIA IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT FOR ITSELF BUT FOR ITS IMPACT ON SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH IS OF EVEN GREATER SIGNIFICANCE TO US. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A RHODESIAN SOLUTION WHICH ASSURES WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS THAT MAJORITY RULE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY BRING ANARCHY, CIVIL WAR, PANIC, AND COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM. WE BELIEVE THAT AN ORDERLY TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE COMPLEXION OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH ULTIMATELY EMERGES OR THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT IT RECEIVES, AS FAR AS SOUTH AFRICA IS CONCERNED. FOR THIS REASON, WE WOULD PLACE A HIGHER PRIORITY ON AN ORDERLY TRANSFER THAN ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED BY AN AFRICAN MAJORITY. WE SAY THIS BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THE TWO MAY BE INCOMPATIBLE. IT APPEARS TO US THAT PEACEFUL SELECTION BY REFERENDUM OF AN AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS BECOMING LESS LIKELY. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT IN OUR MINDS THAT THE FRONTLINE (GRUDGINGLY SUPPORTED BY MUCH OF THE REST OF AFRICA) WILL NOW INSIST ON FULL PATRIOTIC FRONT CONTROL IN ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH EMERGES FROM A SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA. WHILE THE PF MAY GIVE LIP SERVICE TO ITS WILLINGNESS TO SUBMIT EVENTUALLY TO A REFERENDUM OF THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE, WE ARE SKEPTICAL THAT ANY SUCH ELECTION WILL TAKE

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PLACE UNLESS IT WERE SO ORGANIZED THAT IT WOULD CLEARLY RESULT IN A PF VICTORY.

2. WE WOULD BE PLEASED IF AN IDEAL SOLUTION WERE STILL AVAILABLE TO US WHICH WOULD BRING THE POWER THE MODERATE NATIONALISTS COMMITTED TO A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING ECONOMIC SYSTEM. BUT WE BELIEVE THE TIME WHEN SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE WAS AVAILABLE TO US HAS PASSED. TOO MANY CHANCES HAVE BEEN MISSED FOR SUCH A SOLUTION OVER THE YEARS. AND WITH EACH MISSED CHANCE NATIONALISTS DEMANDS HAVE RISEN AND SMITH'S BARGAINING POSITION WEAKENED. WE MUST NOW TAKE SERIOUSLY THE POSSIBILITY OF SHARPLY INCREASED GUERRILLA WARFARE WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE SMITH REGIME AND THE DRIVING FROM RHODESIA OF THE REMAINING WHITE POPULATION AS OCCURRED IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. IN ORDER TO AVOID SUCH A RESULT, WHITE RHODESIANS, SOUTH AFRICANS, AND THE WEST WILL HAVE TO BE REALISTIC ENOUGH TO ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT THAT IS LESS THAN SATISFACTORY IN THE SENSE THAT IT DOES NOT CONTAIN AS MUCH PROTECTION FOR THE WHITE COMMUNITY AS THEY WOULD LIKE AND INCLUDES NATIONALIST ELEMENTS WHICH EITHER

BECAUSE OF THEIR FREEDOM FIGHTER BACKGROUND OR MARXIST TENDENCIES ARE NOT TRUSTED. IT IS OUR FEELING HERE THAT BLACK RHODESIAN SOCIETY IS STILL FAIRLY STURDY. INCLUSION OF MUGABE AND SOME ZIPA ELEMENTS IN AN ULTIMATE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NECESSARILY PORTEND THE CREATION OF A MARXIST STATE IN ZIMBABWE. MUGABE STRIKES US AT THE MOMENT AS BEING IN A RELATIVELY WEAK POSITION. A GOVERNMENT FORMED IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN WHPCH HE PARTICIPATES WILL NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN HIS EMERGENCE AS THE STRONGEST FORCE. IN THIS WE AGREE WITH MAPUTO'S ANALYSIS. EITHER WE THE BRITISH, RHODESIANS, AND SOUTH AFRICANS ARE PREPARED TO TAKE A CHANCE NOW

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ON A LESS THAN SATISFACTORY GOVERNMENT OR WE MAKE MORE CERTAIN THE EMERGENCE OF EXTREMISTS LIKE TONGOGARA AND AN ELEMENT RESPONSIVE TO MOZAMBICAN INFLUENCE.

3. NOT ONLY DO WE FIND THE PROPOSAL TO SUBSTITUTE MUZOREWA FOR MUGABE/ZIPA UNREALISTIC BUT WE CAN SEE SOME POSITIVE ADVANTAGES TO INCLUSION OF THE LATTER IN THE GOVERNMENT.
---TO EXCLUDE MUGABE/ZIPA FROM THE SETTLEMENT IS TO LEAVE OUT A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT WHICH, AS MAPUTO HAS POINTED OUT, IS CAPABLE OF SERIOUSLY DISRUPTING THE TRANSITION TO AFRICAN RULE. WE SEE MORE ADVANTAGE TO KEEPING IT ASSOCIATED WITH THESE EFFORTS.
---TO IGNORE MUGABE/ZIPA IS TO DENY THAT AFRICANS THEMSELVES HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN OBTAINING MAJORITY RULE AND ACCEPT THAT IT WAS HANDED TO THEM BY EXTERNAL FORCES. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE AFRICANS IN AND OUTSIDE OF RHODESIA. THE FRONTLINE AND PF HAVE MADE A MAJOR POINT, NOW PICKED UP BY THE OAU, THAT PROGRESS TO DATE INCLUDING THE GENEVA TALKS IS DUE TO THE PRESSURE BROUGHT BY THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS. THE ARMED STRUGGLE PROVIDES THE RATIONALE FOR RECENT RECOGNITION OF THE PF AS ITS POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

BECAUSE AFRICANS HAVE BUILT SUCH A STRONG PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL CASE AROUND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, THEY WILL NOT BE WILLING TO ALLOW THIS ELEMENT TO BE LEFT OUT. THIS IS A SERIOUS ISSUE FOR THEM.

--THE CONTINUED ALLIANCE BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE/ZIPA IS THE ONE COMBINATION ON WHICH THE FRONTLINE

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CAN FULLY AGREE. DIVISION

WITHIN THE FRONTLINE AND HENCE THE OAU WOULD MAKE AN ORDERLY RHODESIAN SOLUTION CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT. THEIR OPPOSITION WOULD MAKE IT PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE. WE BELIEVE THAT MACHEL AND NYERERE WOULD REFUSE TO SUPPORT A MOVEMENT WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE MUGABE/ZIPA. KAUNDA PUTS A HIGH VALUE ON FRONTLINE UNITY AND IS SUSCEPTIBLE ENOUGH TO INFLUENCE, ESPECIALLY FROM NYERERE, THAT HE WOULD NOT DISAGREE WITH THEM.

4. JOSHUA NKOMO IS IMPORTANT TO THE MUGABE/NKOMO COMBINATION NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND PRESUMED BALANCE BUT ALSO FOR HIS ROLE AS LEADER OF THE NDBELE TRIBE. WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF THIS GROUP IN A ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT, IT APPEARS TO US UNLIKELY THAT OPEN TRIBAL WARFARE COULD BE AVOIDED. AT THE MOMENT NKOMO CAN COMMAND THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE NDBELE. IF, HOWEVER, ANOTHER NDBELE LEADER WOULD EMERGE OR NKOMO WOULD BE WILLING TO STEP ASIDE FOR ONE OF HIS DEPUTIES, IT SEEMS TO US THAT SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION MIGHT BE SATISFACTORY.

5. WE AGREE WITH LONDON THAT A SETTLEMENT IN WHICH SMITH PARTICIPATES IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE. ANY AGREEMENT WITH SMITH OR ARRANGEMENT LEAVING HIM IN A POSITION TO CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE WOULD DISCREDIT THE AFRICANS WHO ENTERED INTO IT SO FAR AS THE REST OF THE NATIONALISTS AND INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES ARE CONCERNED. FURTHERMORE THE DEGREE OF MISTRUST OF SMITH WHICH NOW EXISTS IS SO GREAT THAT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANY AFRICAN NATIONALIST GROUP WOULD ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT WITH HIM UNDER TERMS WHICH GAVE THEM ANYTHING LESS THAN CLEARCUT AND IMMEDIATE CONTROL. WE CANNOT IMAGINE SMITH ACCEPTING ANY SUCH SOLUTION. ANOTHER RHODESIAN WHITE, EVEN FROM THE RHODESIAN FRONT MIGHT PROVIDE THE AFRICANS WITH A BASIS TO MODERATE THEIR DEMANDS ENOUGH TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO A MAJORITY OF THE RHODESIAN WHITES.

6. NOR DOES IT APPEAR LIKELY THAT SMITH'S INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WILL SUCCEED. HE MAY PASS LEGISLATION CORRECTING SOME RACIAL INJUSTICE AND RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM A FEW AFRICANS BUT HE IS NOT

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LIKELY TO GET MUCH FURTHER. THE FACT THAT THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE DID NOT SLAM THE DOOR ON MUZOREWA MAY BOLSTER HIS RESISTANCE TO AN AGREEMENT WITH SMITH. HE HAS BEEN WARNED AGAINST SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT BY THE BRITISH. HIS DISTRUST OF SMITH IS GREAT AND HE RECOGNIZES THAT A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH SMITH WOULD DISCREDIT HIM WITH AFRICANS, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF ZIMBABWE. BUT THE TEMPTATION WILL BE GREAT. HIS OR OTHERS COOPERATION WITH SMITH IN AN ELECTION OR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND BY THE OTHER NATIONALISTS AND FRONTLINE STATES. THIS WOULD LEAD BEFORE LONG TO INCREASED BLOODSHED. UNLESS NKOMO WENT ALONG WITH IT, A SMITH-MUZOREWA DEAL WOULD OPEN THE COUNTRY TO Ndbele/Shona warfare WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. NKOMO'S NEWLY STRENGTHENED POSITION WITHIN THE PF AND RECOGNITION OF THE PF BY THE FRONTLINE AND THE OAU LEAD HIM TO FEEL THAT CONTROL OF THE FUTURE ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT IS WITHIN HIS GRASP IF HE STICKS WITH THE FRONTLINE AND THE PF. AN AGREEMENT WITH SMITH AND MUZOREWA WOULD FORCE HIM TO SHARE POWER, OR MORE LIKELY, TO ACCEPT A SECONDARY POSITION. AT THIS POINT ANYWAY HE WOULD REFUSE TO DO THIS. THE ONLY CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH WE COULD IMAGINE AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SUCCEEDING WOULD BE IF SMITH PERMITTED AN ELECTION SUPERVISED BY THE UN IN WHICH ALL NATIONALIST ELEMENTS WERE FREE TO PARTICIPATE. IT SEEMS LIKELY HOWEVER THAT THE INDEPENDENT AFRICAN NATIONS WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE UN OR OTHER NON-PARTISAN INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH AN ELECTION AS LONG AS SMITH REMAINED IN CONTROL.

7. THE QUESTION STILL REMAINS: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO BRING THE WHITE RHODESIANS AND THE NATIONALISTS CLOSER TOGETHER? IN OUR VIEW, THERE IS VERY LITTLE RIGHT NOW. ON THE CONTRARY, WE BELIEVE THAT DURING THE NEXT TWO OR THREE MONTHS THE TWO SIDES WILL MOVE FARTHER APART. SMITH WILL TAKE CAUTIOUS STEPS TOWARDS WORKING OUT HIS INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND THE NATIONALISTS

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AND FRONTLINE WILL SEEK STEPPED UP COMMUNIST ARMED SUPPORT TO PROTECT AGAINST RHODESIAN INCURSIONS INTO FRONTLINE TERRITORY AS FOR INSTANCE DURING THE UPCOMING PODGORNY VISIT. THERE MAY BE SOME INCREASE IN MILITARY ACTIVITY. WE THINK IT UNLIKELY THAT EITHER SIDE WILL

MEET WITH MUCH SUCCESS. FOR THE TIME BEING NEITHER WILL BE PREPARED TO MAKE THE CONCESSIONS TO THE OTHER WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS TO TAKE PLACE. IN FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS THE RECOGNITION BY EACH SIDE THAT NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD THE SETTLEMENT AND THAT A DEBILITATING STRUGGLE IS GETTING THEM NOWHERE MAY LEAD THEM TO BE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO A NEW MEANINGFUL ATTEMPT AT SETTLEMENT.

IN THE MEANTIME WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD:

--CONTINUE OUR STRONG PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO AN UNWORKABLE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

--ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE THE PARTIES FROM PROCEEDING WITH IT THROUGH PRIVATE CHANNELS TO SMITH THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA, AND TO MUZOREWA DIRECTLY WHEN HE IS OUTSIDE RHODESIA AND THROUGH MEMBERS OF HIS ORGANIZATION.

--REESTABLISH DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE PF LEADERSHIP TO LAY A BASIS FOR EXPLORATION OF PRINCIPALS OF A LATER SETTLEMENT AND TO ALLAY THEIR CONTINUING SUSPICION THAT WE WILL ONLY DEAL WITH THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM THROUGH FRONTLINE LEADERS RATHER THAN THE PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES.

--GIVE GENTLE ENCOURAGEMENT TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE GROUPS

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TO ACCEPT THE OAU CHALLENGE TO BROADEN THE PF.

8. AS THIS IS WRITTEN, THE MURDER OF SEVEN MISSIONARIES IN RHODESIA HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS. WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMPACT SUCH NEWS WILL HAVE IN THE US AND THE COMPLICATIONS IT COULD CREATE NOT ONLY FOR REPEAL OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT BUT ALSO FOR THE KIND OF SETTLEMENT WE HAVE ARGUED ABOVE IS THE MOST SATISFACTORY ALTERNATIVE WHICH IS REALISTICALLY AVAILABLE TO US AT THIS STAGE. WE CONSIDER IT NEVERTHELESS NECESSARY. LOW

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